

ESDN by 2025 - new strategic steps under way



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Who would have known that after 15 months we would still be struggling with the global COVID-19 pandemic? Lack of awareness of the future diminishes as the vaccination proceeds, but there are still many question marks. The situation in Europe has indeed improved from where we were when the pandemic started, but Europe is not safe until the whole world is safe.

During these 15 months, the European Sustainable Development Network and its member countries have worked persistently for sustainable development. Acute crisis, however severe, must not freeze us from striving for an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable future. Our message is crystal clear: the 2030 Agenda provides a compass and objectives to build back better and greener.

The members and partners of the ESDN Association have not been able to meet face-to-face during the time of the pandemic, but virtual meetings, events and conferences have proved their ability to deliver, both technically and with regard to content.

One big step was taken earlier this year when the Association defined its Mission and Vision 2025. In order to be able to serve the member countries and partners around Europe and beyond, also on

a longer-term, we needed to know who we are and where we want to go, what is the purpose and added-value of the ESDN Association, what our strengths are and what we want to do better. The previous ESDN Joint Understanding was partially outdated and did not fully reflect the new [ESDN Statutes](#) that were adopted in October 2019.

According to the new ESDN Mission, *“The ESDN is a non-profit, pan-European peer-learning, networking, knowledge, and advocacy platform for sustainability professionals in the public sector working in collaboration with other organisations and institutions dealing with sustainable development issues. It is based on the transparent and trustful cooperation of these actors. It collects, compiles and shares information on sustainability policies, strategies and practises, and provides expertise to political decision-makers at European, national and sub-national levels. The ESDN also fosters sustainable development through active communication and continued cooperation with other stakeholders and civil society.”*

Our new Vision 2025 emphasizes that we want the ESDN to be recognised as the main network of sustainable development professionals in the public sector in all European countries, EU institutions and globally. The ESDN continues to promote sustainable development policies and share best practices on topics that add value to Regular Members and to a wider audience of sustainability professionals and stakeholders. By 2025, the ESDN will still be performing as a sustainable development knowledge hub on sustainability policies and practises in the European countries.

The next step in realizing the Mission and Vision, is to outline a feasible strategy – how to get there. The Regular Members of the ESDN are discussing the key elements, objectives, measures and means for such a strategy at the very moment. The intention is to finalize the strategy process by the end of year 2021, with the support of the nine current Regular Members and contributions from the large ESDN family.



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It goes without saying that to become THE network of sustainable development professionals in Europe, we need to extend our membership to more countries and partners. I am happy to announce that we have already taken first steps towards this direction: the Government of Romania became a Regular Member in 2020 and the Government of Spain joined the ESDN as Regular Members in January 2021.

As our Mission states, we want to provide a trustful, transparent and participatory platform for European Governments and stakeholders

dealing with sustainable development. Nevertheless, we also need to explore European and non-European networks with whom to increase cooperation on sustainable development policies and practises and become a true partner to the European Union institutions.

If there were no ESDN, we would need to establish one. The Network has functioned successfully for almost 20 years. We do not need or want to reinvent the wheel, but to steer the Association to serve the European countries and people towards sustainable development in the 2020s.

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